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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR JANUARY 23, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for January 23, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

SABAH / OZGUR GUNDEM: A 12-person U.S. delegation came to Van to study the bird flu cases at local level. Van Governor briefed the delegation which will later reportedly pay a visit to Van Centennial University to see the patients suspected of having bird flu. U.S. Department of State Deputy Undersecretary Ann Derse said that the measures undertaken against bird-flu were pleasing.

OZGUR GUNDEM: DTP (Democratic Society Party) administrators in Agri's Patnos district, who were detained because of a January 18 press announcement made to protest confinement of Abdullah Ocalan to a prison cell, have been released.

EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM: Five years have reportedly passed since Serdar Tanis, HADEP's former Silopi provincial chairperson, and Ebubekir Deniz, HADEP's provincial leader, disappeared allegedly after being summoned to Silopi Jandarma Command in January 2001. It is anticipated that the lawsuit brought at the European Court of Human Rights concerning the disappearance will reach a verdict at the end of February.

OZGUR GUNDEM: A delegation formed by the Human Rights Association (HRA) and Mazlum-Der (Association for Solidarity for Human Rights and Oppressed People) went to Cizre. The delegation made a call on the PKK/Kongra-Gel to announce via a media channel the spot at which the PKK would be releasing the police officer Hakan Acil, who they kidnapped October 9, 2005 in Cizre.

OZGUR GUNDEM: People in Semdinli have closed their businesses temporarily as protest against the confinement of Abdullah Ocalan to a prison cell for 20 days and against the release of Sergeant Tanju Cavus, an officer held as the defendant of the killing of Ali Yilmaz during a demonstration that followed Semdinli incident which took place in November 9, 2005.

OZGUR GUNDEM: An entertainment program on a national TV station, which enjoyed high ratings in Turkey, has been discontinued allegedly because the entertainer of the program, who is a well-known celebrity, reportedly said that she was of Kurdish-origin. She was neither ashamed of her origin nor boastful of it, and she said that everybody were brothers (in Turkey). Kurdish Artists Initiative condemned the TV station for its decision to end the program following these statements of the celebrity on a live TV program.

HURRIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM: Many roads have been closed and access has been blocked to many villages due to the heavy snowfall in the southeastern region. 500 people, who were stuck on a road in the Haruna Crossing between Yuksekova and Semdinli districts because of the snow, risked death while they waited for five hours for the rescue team to reach them.

OZGUR GUNDEM: A 4.0-magnitude earthquake shook Mersin yesterday at 4.26 p.m.

EVRENSEL: In the course of the Semdinli investigation Van Prosecutors decided to seize computers at the Semdinli Security Directorate. A search of the hard disks was reportedly started a while ago upon allegations by the head of the Anti-terror Branch of National Security Directorate that Veysel Ates's statement given while he was in detention, was lost. (Note: Veysel Ates is the PKK defector who had been in Semdinli along with the two officers during the Semdinli incident of November 9, 2005. End Note.)

BOLGE: Members of the TKP (Turkish Communist Party) marched towards the TEKEL Cigarette factory in Adana to protest the government's decision to close down the factory.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Saban Bas, Chairperson of the Adana Chamber of Commerce, suggested that Adana's Tekel Cigarette Factory, which will be closed down by the Privatization Authority, be bought by Adana businessmen in order to revive it.

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